



Francesco Grilli: Karlsruhe Institute of Technology

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Francesco Grilli now at Karlsruhe Institute of Technology

After graduating with his Ph.D. from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne, Francesco Grilli became a postdoc at the Lab for three years beginning in 2004. Working within the Lab's then Superconductivity Technology Center, he describes it as the "golden age" of the field since Department of Energy funding for the work was readily available and he had access to a robust and multidisciplinary group of colleagues. His work included research into high-temperature superconductors, more specifically into improving their performance in cable and coil applications.

During his time in Los Alamos, Grilli met the woman who would later become his wife but, since he would finish his postdoc assignment before she would finish hers, he managed to get another postdoc position in Canada at Polytechnique Montréal and in 2008 partnered with the Lab again in work related to modernizing the U.S. electric grid, thus keeping them in touch.

Grilli now works as a group leader at the Institute for Technical Physics at the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology in Germany where he and his colleagues are working on high-temperature superconductor tapes and devices for power applications.

When he arrived in Los Alamos his experience was mostly on numerical simulations of superconductors, but while at the Lab he developed abilities related to the experimental side of the house as well. Today he finds he draws upon both skill sets.

Another experience gained at the Lab was communicating research aims to funders. He was asked to help at an organizational peer review.

"Postdocs don't usually present at those since they can be rather political," said Grilli, "however, it was a great learning experience for me—how to talk to potential funders—and I still use those skills today."

Ironically, while both Grilli and his wife (Tianshu Li, who is a chemist) worked at the Lab as postdocs, they didn't meet at the Lab proper. Rather, since they both love the outdoors, they met during a Los Alamos Mountaineers outing to Bluff, Utah.

Grilli would like to acknowledge Steve Ashworth, now with Soccasoli Superconductor, who was his supervisor and mentor while he was at the Lab.

In 2011 Grilli received the Dr. Meyer-Struckmann Science Prize of Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus for his work on "Modeling and Simulation of power system devices based on the technology of high-temperature superconductors."

He was also featured in the [Tomorrow Today's Brilliant Minds](#) series back in 2010.

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